

“When Operational Circumstances Permit”

In response to a recommendation from the HAC Safety Committee passed at the HAC Convention in the Spring of 2011, the HAC Board approved a resolution on the use of helmets by helicopter flight crews.

The issue was brought sharply in to focus when the Transportation Safety Board issued a [Safety Advisory](#) in the Fall of 2009. The Advisory encouraged HAC to develop an advocacy program aimed at increasing the use of helmets by helicopter flight crews. The Advisory cited a number of helicopter accidents where injuries to the flight crew were reduced, or could have been reduced through the use of a helmet.

The HAC Board of Directors passed the following resolution in June of 2011:

“HAC strongly recommends to its operator members that they should promote the use of helmets for helicopter flight crew member under all operational circumstances which permit their use.”

While HAC still strongly recommends a company policy on the use of helmets for flight crews, some questions have arisen from operators and others about the meaning of “under all operational circumstances which permit their use”.

The Board believes that there are circumstances where the use of a helmet may *not be advisable*, and the Board recently approved the following policy for the consideration of members:

1. Under any operational circumstances where the use of a helmet may present *significant additional risk* in the course of day-to-day operations – for example, certain helicopter types when combined with certain helmet-types and pilot physiology may combine to make it difficult for the pilot to operate the aircraft or to extend and remove his/her head through the open aircraft door or in to a bubble-window, during long-lining operations. Under certain circumstances, a helmet could make it less-safe for the pilot to complete the operation, or delay pilots from re-entering the aircraft under emergency circumstances at low altitude, for example.
2. If a helmet should become unserviceable during operational circumstances, and there is no other suitable helmet that is readily available, the company may wish to establish policy where the pilot may continue operations with the use of headset until an early repair can be carried out, or until a suitable replacement helmet can be made available.